Herding Cats: A Faculty e-learning initiative reviewed

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SO WHAT’S THE CONTEXT?

- The University College?
- The Faculty?
- Herding cats?….. Academics (in England at any rate!) working with each other!!!
• 13,405 students
• Income £58.4 million (roughly $115 million)
• Majority of departments rated good/excellent for teaching quality
• 85% of students in work after six months (compared with 68% nationally)
THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION

• One of the largest in the country working to train and develop staff and organisations in all education sectors - early years, all school grades, college, adult, community and university and with business, public sector, communities, charities, local, regional and national government

• Around 6000 students and growing, on programmes from degree to Doctoral level

• Around 280 academic members of staff

• A UK government Category “A” Provider recognising the quality of Teaching, Research and Consultancy (remember English higher education regulation system)

• Over £7m (approx $14m) additional research, development and consultancy revenue earned in the last two years

• Considerable off site provision serving the south east of England and London (e.g. Teach First) as well as national and international developments
SO, e-LEARNING... WHY DO IT?

- Developing our pedagogies - the quality of learning and teaching for new and experienced education professionals and their organisations

- Thereby impacting on the quality of learning and teaching in our schools, colleges and universities

AND

- Not doing the same thing differently.....but using e-learning technologies to do things.... better!!!
The Faculty of Education vision is to be a Centre of Excellence for educational practice, research and consultancy and to engage locally, nationally and internationally in the development, brokerage and application of pedagogic knowledge.

(Faculty Strategic Plan 2003-3006)
STRATEGIC PLANNING: FACULTY

- To develop inclusive and developmental approaches to learning & teaching that are responsive to initiatives for widening participation, outreach and non-traditional modes of study and that utilise new technologies as appropriate.

- To develop responses to existing and anticipated student cohorts that support more effective learning & teaching within academic and professional education.

(Extracts from the Faculty Strategic Plan)
The role of the e-Learning Strategic Plan is to contribute to the attainment of the strategic goals identified by Departments, Faculty and College. In operational terms…

...it is at the levels of Department and Faculty that this Strategic Plan must work.

(Extract from Faculty E-Learning Strategic Plan)
SO...HOW TO DO THIS??

- Our approach has been that of academics... holding thoughtful and critically reviewed approaches to learning and teaching....and to change and managing change rooted in research

- So...here’s what we are doing....

- And also here are four key theoretical frameworks that have informed our work....
OBJECTIVES

To develop a Faculty E-Learning Strategic Plan (utilising a SMART approach) designed in the light of Department and Faculty Strategic Plans and intended to support the goals identified in these plans.

More specifically:

• Working from the Faculty Strategic Plan, to identify for the Faculty, the E-Learning core values and purposes which will frame all E-Learning developments across the Faculty.

• Working from each Department/Centre Strategic Plan, to identify for each Department and Centre, in the light of the above, specific E-Learning aims, objectives and outcomes.

• Working through Faculty Management Team and Department Meetings, to ensure approval and added detail for these plans.

(All Extracts from Faculty e-Learning Strategic Plan)
TIMESCALE

PHASE 1
Analysis of Dept/Centre Strategic Plans
By end Dec 2002
Outcome - A provisional E-Learning Strategic Plan.

PHASE 2
Departments/Centres revise/add detail to the provisional Strategic Plan
By mid Feb 2003
Outcome - A full draft E-Learning Strategic Plan

PHASE 3
E–Learning Strategic Plan to Faculty for approval by End March 2003
Outcome - A full E-Learning Strategic Plan, supported by the Faculty and CCCUC central services to be implemented from September 2003 until July 2006.
PHASES 4, 5 AND 6: NOW!
2003/04, 2004/05, 2005/06

1. E-Learning programme specific development work in each Department and Centre

2. E-Learning research, development and dissemination activities

3. The monitoring, management, maintenance and development of the Faculty’s E-Learning Resources

PLUS

4. Regular reviews and revisions of the Strategic Plan

3 Strategic Areas of Work to support Dept/Centre Plans
DETAILED STRATEGIC AND OPERATIONAL PLANNING

EXAMPLES FROM...

- FACULTY e-LEARNING PLAN
- PRIMARY (AGES 3 – 11)
- CELSI – CONSULTANCY AND EDUCATION LEADERSHIP
RESOURCING:
A CUNNING PLAN??

- TTA (government) funding for capital expenditure
- CCCUC and Faculty funding for support... being enterprising
- Future government (TTA, HEFCE and DfES) and other funding...
e-WORKING: FOR QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND ENHANCEMENT

- A mature approach to Quality means we have moved beyond seeing it as externally imposed and measured and only narrowly focused on teaching and research.

- Collectively, we need to actively manage the work of the Faculty.

- We have a need for data handling tools to be used by most/all of us, not a few!
- Faculty Student Data Project - QLS, QLE and ProClarity
- Faculty Remote and Mobile Working Project
- Faculty Information Strategy and Web Presence
As a Faculty

- Interpreting and moving forward from the bottom lines provided by the TTA/OFSTED framework and the QAA Precepts and Descriptors….with Learning and Teaching and Staff Development Committees

As a University College

- Computing Services, LTEU, Library Services and MIS are critical players in determining our success…. 
SO WHAT’S HAPPENING??

AVAILABLE TO VIEW ONLINE TODAY
Learning Communities #1: Staff
e-Learning
remote and mobile working

Learning Communities #2: Student Teachers
Religious Education
Science
Professional Studies

'Progress'
An e-tool for Evidencing Progress, and Tutor Monitoring & Feedback

ALSO ONGOING BUT MAY NOT BE AVAILABLE ONLINE
Digital Video
Physical Education

Student Data Handling Tool
ProClarity
ADDITIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- Staff Induction & Development Needs Analysis
- Student Computing Induction & Registration
- Faculty-wide staff development activities in place
THE FACULTY PERSPECTIVE:

- Students of all ages are already engaged in using learning and communication technologies in ways unimagined by either educationists or technology providers.

- E-learning is a catalyst for critical curriculum evaluation and development, not simply as a more “efficient” means of doing the same things as before.
References to pedagogy are peppered over these (e-learning) documents in a similar manner to an anxious waiter in a bad restaurant trying to make up for the shortcomings of the meal that has just been served.

In both cases, some important ingredient is missing and we are left disappointed and unsatisfied. (Blamires, M. 2003)

- The Faculty is making its voice heard and needs to do so increasingly....conferences, papers, articles and books...

- TTA approaching the Faculty....
FOUR KEY THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

- Learning
- Managing Change
- Teacher Leadership
- Networked Learning
A SOCIAL MODEL OF LEARNING

(Elaine Wenger 1997)

- Learning as doing
- Learning as belonging
- Practice
- Community
- Meaning
- Identity
- Learning as becoming
- Learning as experience
MANAGING COMPLEX CHANGE

- **Vision** + **Skills** + **Incentives** + **Resources** + **Action Plan** = **Change**
- **Skills** + **Incentives** + **Resources** + **Action Plan** = **Confusion**
- **Vision** + **Incentives** + **Resources** + **Action Plan** = **Anxiety**
- **Vision** + **Skills** + **Resources** + **Action Plan** = **Resistance**
- **Vision** + **Skills** + **Incentives** + **Action Plan** = **Frustration**
- **Vision** + **Skills** + **Incentives** + **Resources** = **Treadmill**

TEACHER LEADERSHIP: IN UNIVERSITIES AS WELL AS SCHOOLS

We need to work with one another as we are asking teachers to work... based on research findings.

- teachers are at the ‘sharp edge’ of school change (Bascia and Hargreaves, 2000)...

- ...this must focus on improving pupils’ learning (Stoll, Fink and Earl, 2003)...

- ...This means that teachers need to be involved in leading learning, not only that of their pupils but also their own and colleagues’ professional learning and organisational learning...

Source: Durrant, J. 2004
NETWORKED LEARNING
Derived from the work of Castells (2000)

● WE DON’T KNOW IT ALL #1 The projected demise of the expert-teacher as the sole arbiter of truth and the consequential death of the teacher-pupil paradigm of instruction

● WE DON’T KNOW IT ALL #2 A non-hierarchical and de-centred rhizomic network which can cope with the death of a node and its re-birth in a different ‘space’ but which can also create, produce and host ‘new’ information that has hitherto been unseen by certain communities or groups

● WE DON’T KNOW IT ALL #3 - The need for a new understanding of ‘content development, instructional design and mechanisms of assessment’
AND SO...

- We have just won the contract, as lead partners with the University of London Institute of Education, to develop an electronic resource base for initial teacher education in England.
- We have just won, as partners with several other universities, a $500,000 contract to create on-line video narratives to support learning and teaching and of educational research methodologies at Masters and Doctoral levels.
- We have secured additional TTA funding for more experimental/developmental work and to support planned developments.
- We have evidence of rhizomic progress.
- We have committed additional Faculty resource to support the work – funding and 2-3 staff.
- BUT…. we’re all too aware of how much we still have to learn!
WHAT IS YOUR ADVICE?

1. STRATEGIC PLANNING  How is e-learning being developed in your organisation?  What lessons have you learned?

2. LEARNING/TEACHING/PEDAGOGY  Is e-learning just about doing the same (learning and teaching stuff) as before but more slickly/"efficiently"….or is it about doing more than that…. Do you have a perspective on learning and pedagogy?

3. CHANGE  How are you managing the changes involved as e-learning become mainstreamed?  How do you view the role of your colleagues in these changes?
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LINKS

e-LEARNING GUIDES
http://education-resources.cant.ac.uk/faculty/e-learning/guides/

SHARING PRACTICE
http://education-resources.cant.ac.uk/faculty/e-learning/sharing-practice/

RESOURCES
http://education-resources.cant.ac.uk/faculty/e-learning/resources/

FACULTY, DEPARTMENT & CENTRE E-LEARNING DEVELOPMENT PLANS
(Some on CD, others by application)

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LEARNING & TEACHING STRATEGY
http://www.canterbury.ac.uk/college/strategy/

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LEARNING & TEACHING ENHANCEMENT UNIT
http://lteu.canterbury.ac.uk/
OTHER USEFUL UK LINKS

LTSN Generic Centre
http://www.ltsn.ac.uk/genericcentre/

ESCALATE (Education and Continuing Education LTSN)
http://www.escala.te.ac.uk/

TALENT Project
http://www.le.ac.uk/TALENT/
MANY THANKS!

Do please contact us if you feel it would be useful!

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